IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (*currently amended*) A method for assigning intelligent peripheral resources of a network, comprising:

arranging the intelligent peripheral resources into a plurality of groups;

receiving a request for an intelligent peripheral service from a first requesting element of any element in the network;

identifying an intelligent peripheral resource in response to the request; and

assigning the identified intelligent peripheral resource to the first requesting element; and

forwarding the request from a first group to a second group if the identified intelligent peripheral resource that was assigned the request is not sufficient to meet the request.

2. *cancelled*

3. *(currently amended)* The method of claim 1, further comprising:

grouping the intelligent peripheral resources into one or more groups, the request being receiving by and assigned to a first group;

receiving an additional request in the first group for another intelligent peripheral service resource from a second requesting element; and

assigning intelligent peripheral resource of the first group to the second element if such intelligent peripheral resource is available in the first group.

4. *(original)* The method of claim 1, wherein the intelligent peripheral resources are supplied by one or more intelligent peripherals, the identifying step identifying one of the intelligent peripherals that is able to satisfy the request, the assigning step assigning the identified intelligent peripheral to the request.

5. *(original)* The method of claim 1, wherein the request is received from a packet-based media stream.

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6. *(original)* The method of claim 1, wherein the request is received from a circuit-switched based media stream.

7. – 11. *cancelled*

12. *(currently amended)* A system for utilizing intelligent peripheral resources of a network, comprising:

at least one device coupled with at least one first switch, the <u>at least one first</u> switch being coupled with at least one other switch through the network;

at least one intelligent peripheral concentrator coupled with the <u>at least one</u> first switch through the network; and

at least one intelligent peripheral coupled with the intelligent peripheral concentrator, <u>wherein the at least one intelligent peripheral concentrator performs a resource allocation function by determining the status and capability of the intelligent peripheral resources and assigning a request to an intelligent peripheral resource based on the determination.</u>.

13. *(currently amended)* The system according to claim 12, further comprising:

at least one service control point connected to the <u>at least one first</u> switch through the network.

14. *(original)* The system according to claim 13, wherein the service control point directs telephone calls to the intelligent peripheral concentrator or to another network resource.

15. *(currently amended)* The system according to claim 12, wherein the <u>at least one first</u> switch handles media streams in TDM or packetized format.

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16. *(original)* The system according to claim 12, wherein the intelligent peripheral concentrator performs media format translation between a packet-based and a circuit-based technology, and between different packet-based technologies.

17. *(original)* The system according to claim 12 wherein the intelligent peripheral performs at least one of digit collection, voice and video playback, announcement playback, voice and video recording, music recording and playback, collect call processing, forwarding requests and information, pager notification and telephonic alerts.

18. *cancelled*

19. *(currently amended)* The system according to claim 12, wherein the system further comprises ~~connections are~~ at least one of conventional telephone lines, digital transmission facilities, fiber optic lines, direct serial/parallel connections, wireless connections, cellular telephone connections, satellite communications, local area networks and intranet connections for coupling between the at least one device, the at least one first switch, the at least one other switch, the at least one intelligent peripheral concentrator and at least one intelligent peripheral.

20. *cancelled*

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